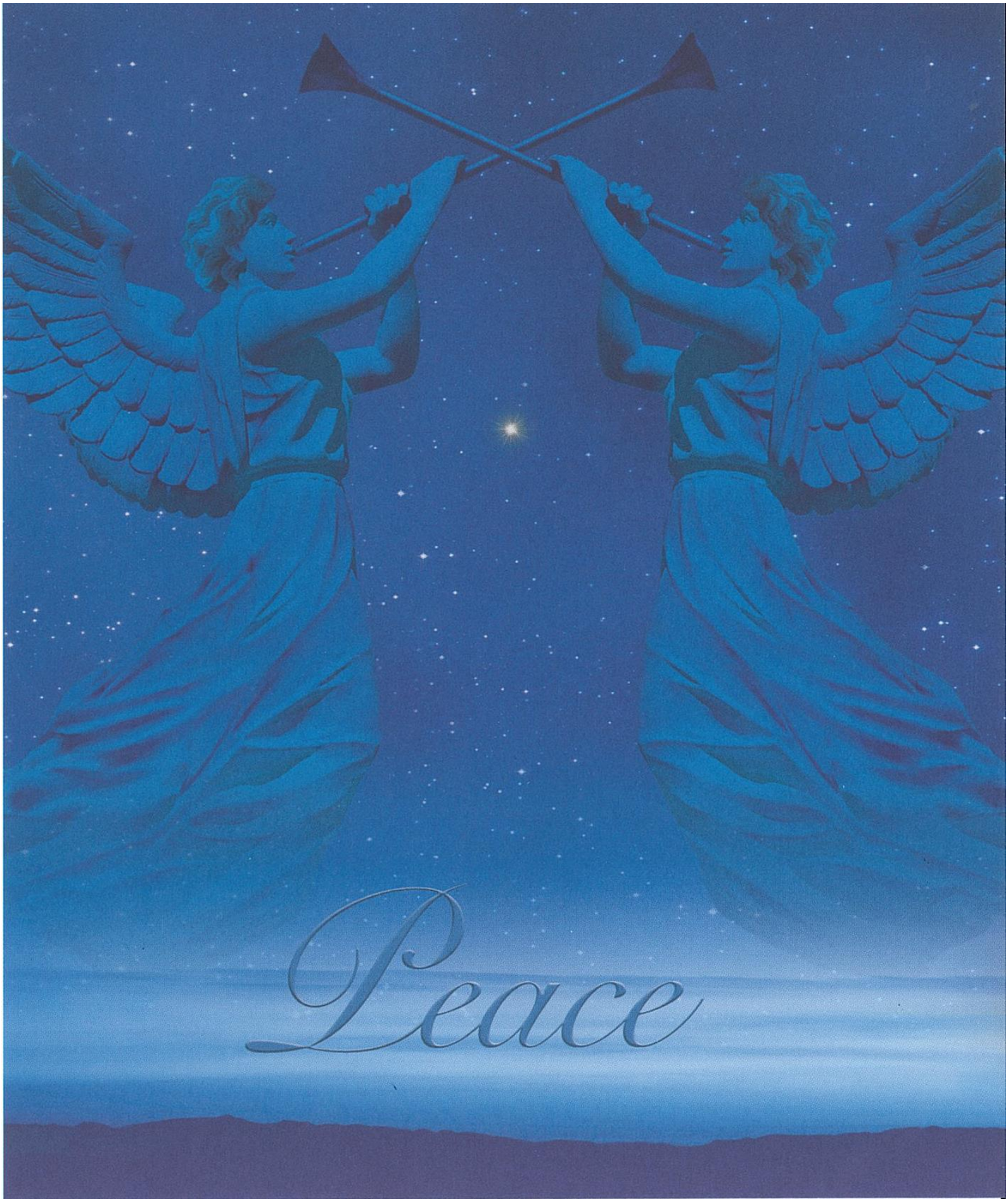

Peace

Morning Worship

Communion Sunday
Second Sunday of Advent

December 6, 2020 8:30 & 10:00 AM

No matter who you are, whom you love, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

*If it is comfortable for you to do so, please stand

APPROACH TO GOD

Let us keep silence as we prepare for worship.

MEDITATION "Most people are bothered by those passages of Scripture they do not understand, but the passages that bother me are those I do understand." Mark Twain

PRELUDE *Poco Adagio con molto espressione* G. Oldroyd
from *Three Liturgical Improvisations* *(1886 – 1951)*

"Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty"

CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Isaiah 40)

Leader: A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

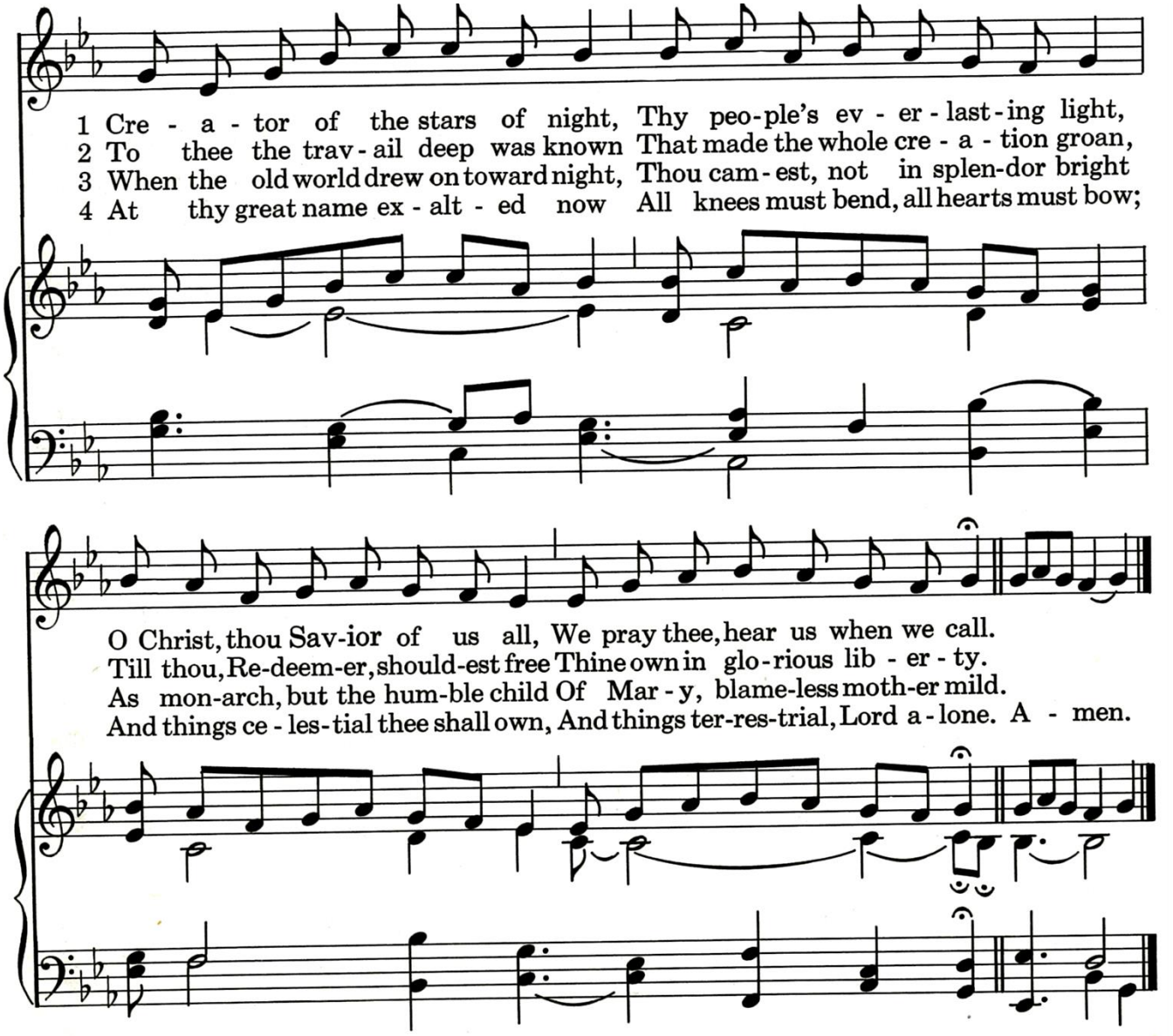
People: Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Leader: Speak to us, Lord. As You promised through Your prophets Isaiah and John the Baptist, come to us now.

People: May all the barriers be removed so that we can receive Your Word and worship You, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

If comfortable to do so, please join in singing our hymns and sung responses during worship, while wearing your mask.

***HYMN #113** *Creator of the Stars of Night* CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM



***OPENING PRAYER** (Unison)

Most loving God, You sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Christ. Help us, the stewards of the sacred Mystery, to prepare ourselves for His coming. May we be found waiting, eager to stand with Him without fear; through this same Christ Who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, in the world that never ends. Amen!

***GLORIA PATRI #513**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end, A-men, A-men.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE OF PEACE

Reader 1: In a world of war, violence and abuse, where families live in shelters and children grow up in fear, God, we call upon you to come.

Reader 2: In a world where peace seems to be so far away, we call upon you, Prince of Peace, to come.

Reader 1: In this season of Advent, we wait for the coming of Peace into our world. We await the birth of Emmanuel, God with us, who comes into our lives in a new way.

Reader 2: Come, Messiah, Come, and Save Us

Prayer: Dear God, we pray for the peace that only You can bring through your Son, Jesus the Christ. May we walk in the paths of peace. Amen.

GREETINGS

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS — Isaiah 40:1–11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Mark 1:1–8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,
"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

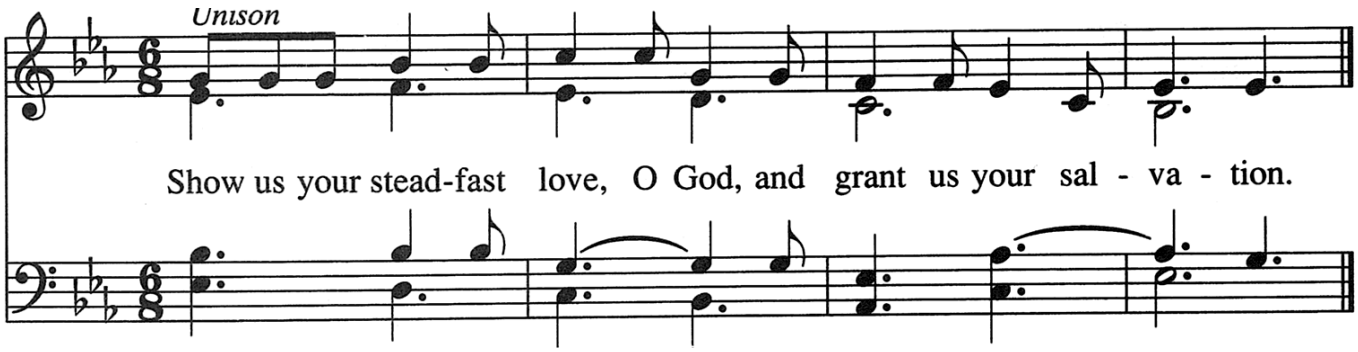
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”
John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Pastor: This is the word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.

GRATIA TIBI *Thanks Be to Thee* T. Tallis
STAFF SINGER QUARTET *(1505 – 1585)*

SERMON “The Moment of Truth” Rev. Dr. Andrew Armstrong

RESPONSIVE PSALM 85:8-13 (10:00)
The Psalm will be intoned once: The Congregation sings the same Response, and then again at the “℟” indication below.

Response

[8]Let me hear what God the
Sovereign will speak,
for God will speak peace
to the people;

God will speak to the faithful,
to those who turn to God in
their hearts.

[9]Surely God’s salvation is at hand for
those who fear God,
that God’s glory may dwell in
our land. ℟

[10]Steadfast love and faithfulness
will meet;
righteousness and peace will
kiss each other.

[11]Faithfulness will spring up
from the ground,
and righteousness will look
down from the sky.

[12]God will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.

[13]Righteousness will go before God,
and will make a path
for God’s steps. ℟

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)

Almighty God, you have named us and claimed us, yet we try to hide from that claiming. We settle for the seeming security and comforts of home, where our talents may be tucked away; our gifts preserved, but paralyzed. You call us to live in faith, investing in the world you made—to exercise our gifts, even at the risk of losing them. Have mercy upon us, Lord; have mercy. Help us understand your will for us. Teach us what you desire. Help us to steward well the gifts you have given us, that one day we might fully enter your joy. Amen.

A time of silence for personal confession

KYRIE #545 *Lord, Have Mercy Upon Us* J. Merbecke

CONGREGATION JOINS IN SINGING *(1510 – 1585)*

Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ have mercy upon us;
Lord, have mercy upon us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Friends, believe the good news.
People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

OFFERTORY *Vom Himmel hoch, da komm Ich her* J. G. Walther

From heaven above, from there I come (*1684 – 1748)*

***ADVENT DOXOLOGY #515** OLD HUNDRETH LM

All praise, eternal Christ to Thee,
Whose Advent sets Thy people free;
once more upon Thy people shine,
and fill the world with love divine. Amen.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (Unison)

O God, be in the ministries and mission for which these gifts are given, and bless those who give them, that we may dedicate ourselves as well. Teach us again and again the power of generosity and love. May we be a part of your creative work of healing in this world. Amen.

The Communion

It is a tradition at First Church that we eat the bread and drink the cup together as the people of God renewing our covenant. We serve grape juice and gluten free bread.

Invitation, Sursum Corda and Communion Prayer

Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.
People: We lift them up to God.
Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.
Leader: Faithful God, we remember the ways you made yourself known in Jesus Christ: how you welcomed, healed, taught, revealed, blessed, challenged, and consoled. We remember that first meal during which he called disciples in all ages to recall his presence at this feast. We remember his crucifixion, burial and his victory over sin, death, and earthly powers. It is you, O God, who invites us to this table not just to remember but to partake of your presence. With the faithful of every time and place, we joyfully praise Your name:

Sanctus #550 S. Wesley
(1766 – 1837)

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory:
Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. A-men.

Leader: We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took bread and having blessed it, He broke it and gave it to His disciples saying, “This is My body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same way, Jesus also took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is of the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” By eating of this bread and drinking this cup, we proclaim Christ’s death, celebrate Christ’s resurrection, and await Christ's coming again.

Sharing of the Bread

Kyrie Eleison F. Schubert
from “Mass in G Major” *(1797 – 1828)*
JANET POISSON, soprano

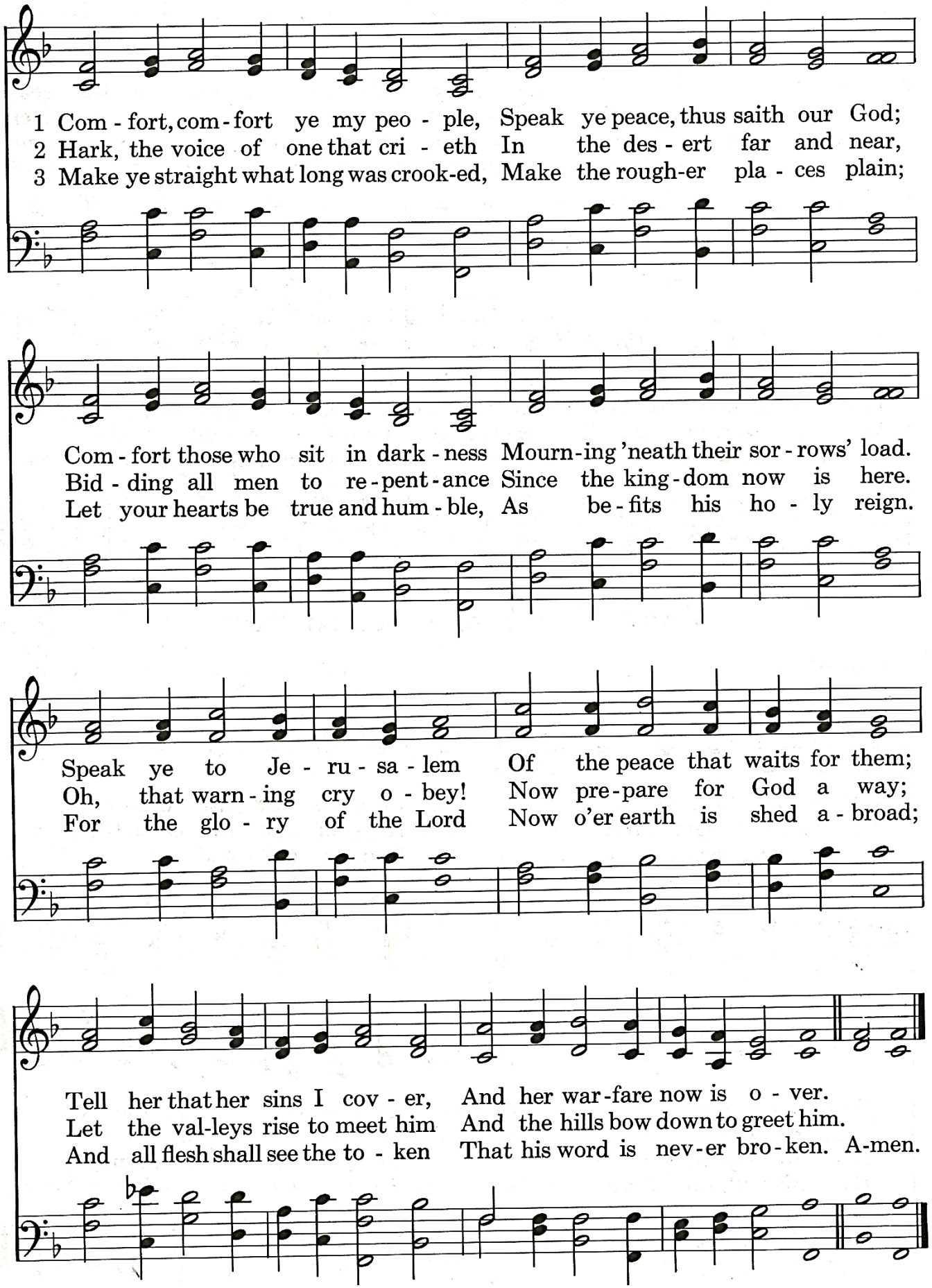
Sharing of the Cup

Agnus Dei F. Schubert
from “Mass in G Major”
TIMOTHY AYRES-KERR, tenor

Prayer of Thanksgiving and The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done,
On earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day, our daily bread
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

***HYMN #104** *Comfort, Comfort Ye My People* PSALM 4



DISMISSAL

Kindly be seated after the Benedictus and remain seated for the Postlude.
After the Postlude, ushers will dismiss the congregation row by row.
We ask you to exit through the rear sanctuary door closest to your pew section.
Those in need of handicap accessibility are welcome to use the link and elevator.

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTUS** *Rejoice!* VENI EMMANUEL

POSTLUDE *Praeludium in D minor* J. Pachelbel
(10:00) *(1653 – 1706)*

OUR WORSHIP HAS ENDED; OUR SERVICE BEGINS

HYMNS & PSALM: Pilgrim Hymnal & New Century Hymnal, CCLI#3034682
DEACON OF THE DAY: Kimberly Lynch
STAFF SINGER QUARTET: Janet Poisson, soprano; Brianne Biastoff, alto
Timothy Ayres-Kerr, tenor; Joseph R. Olefirowicz, bass

****

The flowers in the pulpit are given in loving memory
of her husband, Lloyd, by Bernice Barnes.

****

HEARING AIDS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

****

DVD RECORDINGS ARE MADE OF THE SERVICE AND
ARE AVAILABLE IN THE CHURCH OFFICE FOR BORROWING.

****

Have you remembered First Church in you will?

OUR 10:00 AM SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE IS LIVE STREAMED AND IS AVAILABLE ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL.
IT IS ALSO AIRED ON WSMN RADIO AM 1590 and FM 95.3

<u>Masks must be worn at all times inside the building.</u>
Social distancing practices are expected of the attendees for indoor worship.

Foundations in Christian Formation

Parent to Parent, Tot to Teen
Let's connect via Google Meet to listen and share our parenting experiences. . Meeting dates for December are Thursdays, December 3 & December 17 from 8:00-9:00 PM. Contact LeeAnne for more information and the link.

Contact Information please! If you have not received any communications from LeeAnne, please send your contact information to her at lsteenhoek@tfcucc.org if you are a parent, teacher or volunteer in the Christian Formation program.

Confirmation - The confirmands and mentors meet **today, 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM** via Zoom.
Able Confirmands are strongly encouraged to volunteer at our new welcome center. We have an opportunity to welcome our church family to worship and help deacons and ushers with the detailed work of signing in and sanitizing.

Advent Boxes are available while they last at the welcome center on Sunday mornings and by appointment in the church office. Speak to LeeAnne or Sue.

Advent Packets including Advent Wreath Ceremony Readings to do at home, coloring and activity pages are at the welcome center or can be downloaded from the church website.

Today we light the Candles of Hope and Peace for the Second Sunday of Advent. I'd like to share this story with you:

ONE PERSON'S VOICE
Adapted from The Weight of Nothing
By Marianne Larned in her book *Stone Soup for the World*

"Tell me the weight of a snowflake," a blackbird asked a wild dove.
"Nothing more than nothing," was the answer.
"In that case I must tell you a marvelous story," the blackbird said.

"I sat on the branch of a fir, close to its trunk, when it began to snow….Since I didn't have anything better to do, I counted the snowflakes setting on the twigs and needles of my branch. Their number was exactly 3,741,952.

"When the next snowflake dropped onto the branch – nothing more than nothing, as you say – the branch broke off."

The dove, since Noah's time an authority on the matter, thought about the story for a while and finally said to herself. "Perhaps there is only one person's voice lacking for peace to come about in the world."

Church Happenings and Outreach - New/Current

Midweek Devotions - Each Wednesday, through December 23, the First Church Ministry Team will provide a mid-week devotion to help us reclaim our spiritual center and restore our inner calm. Messages will be uploaded every Wednesday on Facebook, First Church You Tube Station and www.tfcucc.org. Please like our messages and spread the Word!

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Women's Wisdom and Spirituality will meet via Zoom on December 13 from 12:00 to 1:30 PM. Contact Rev. Jami for the link.

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Flowers for Christmas Sunday, December 20. If you wish to purchase a red or white poinsettia to decorate the sanctuary, please fill out the form in today's bulletin and return it, with payment, to church office **by December 11**. Order forms are also available in the December newsletter, upcoming bulletins, and on our website at tfcucc.org. Feel free to contact Sue in the church office with any questions.

++++

Carols and Campfire in the Courtyard - Thursday December 17th at 5:00 PM
Join Revs. Andy, Jami and ministry team members for Christmas Caroling in the Courtyard. We'll have a campfire going in the courtyard for a safe, outdoors, masked, socially distanced carol sing. There will also be Christmas treats and activities that you can take home with you to keep the festive spirit alive. Feel free to invite your friends. We'll have plenty of spill over space beyond the courtyard.

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The Stewardship Committee requests that you please return your pledge card as soon as possible. Cards are available at the back of the sanctuary, at the welcome center, by contacting the church office, or by going online at https://tfcucc.org/2021-online-pledge-card/
ACH-Direct Deposit Pledgers, please be sure to submit your 2021 pledge cards to let us know if your transactions remain the same or if there are any changes or updates you wish to make.

Contact Dianne Smigliani in the church office if you have any questions.

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Year-End Reminder - All contributions for the 2020 tax year must be in the church office by December 31, 2020 or mailed in letter postmarked December 31, 2020. Contact Dianne Smigliani with any questions.

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Music in Worship Next Week
Sunday, December 13
3rd Sunday of Advent
8:30 & 10:00 Staff Singer Quartet

Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and Emergency Fund

"For Such a Time as This" Esther 4:14

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

Over the past nine months, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the emergency financial needs of many who serve the church have increased dramatically. In such a time as this, the need for the Christmas Fund is more urgent than ever.

United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need.

We will receive the offering on Sunday, December 20. For your convenience, offering envelopes are provided in the December newsletter and they may be mailed to the church office. Envelopes will also be available in the pew racks.

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Annual Mitten Tree Drive to Start in January - At the start of the new year we will be collecting mittens to benefit the children at three of our neighborhood schools: Mt. Pleasant Elementary, Broad St. Elementary and Adult Learning Center Day Care.

Knitters and crocheters are hopefully hard at work with plans to fill this tree. We also gratefully receive purchased mittens. All children sizes are needed. As you come across those Christmas bargains while shopping to warm the hearts of loved ones in your life this season, don't forget to pick up a few pairs of mittens to warm the hands of our young neighbors in need this winter.

For questions or further information, contact Susan Testa.

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Thank You Project's 6th Annual Water Walk - This year's virtual 3K event will be held **through December 31, 2020.** The organization supports the third Water Well in Nigeria and also provides scholarships to Nigerian students who would not otherwise be able to afford to go to college. Visit the Thank You Project's website for more information about the organization and their mission. Please gather your family and friends and participate in this virtual walk. Take pictures and videos of your walks and share them on your Facebook page for everyone to see.

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Office and Building use - The church office is open by appointment. Please call ahead to set up a time if you wish to come to the office. Calls continue to be received between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM. The First Church remains closed to all outside group use through the month of December.

DECEMBER 2020 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Worship services are in-person. The 10:00 service (11:00 on December 20)
is live streamed and is available on our YouTube channel.
It also airs on WSMN Radio AM 1590 and FM 95.3

December 6 - Second Sunday of Advent
8:30am: Worship
10:00am: Worship

December 13 - Third Sunday of Advent
8:30am: Worship
10:00am: Worship

December 20 - Christmas Sunday
Christmas at First - Bach's Cantata 147
9:00am: Worship
11:00am: Worship

Thursday, December 24 - Christmas Eve
4:00 PM: Families and Children of all ages*

6:00 PM: Contemplative Christmas

8:00 PM: Service of Lessons and Carols

11:00 PM: Service of Lessons and Carols*

**(4PM and 11PM services will be live streamed online as well)*

December 27 - *First Sunday after Christmas*
10:00am only: Worship

Our nursery is closed and there will be no childcare provided for the services.

FRIDAYS at FIRST
ORGAN SERIES

Recitals will be on the first three Fridays of the Advent season and will begin at 12:15 p.m.

Regional organists will perform FREE 30-minute programs on our 4,000-pipe, 1926 Anderson Memorial Organ—each designed to replenish the soul with beautiful music for the workday or to get the weekend off to a great start.

DECEMBER RECITALS

04 **Michael Havay**
Congregational Church of Amherst, Amherst, NH

11 **George Bozeman**
First Congregational Church, Pembroke, NH

18 **Nicholas White,** Master of Chapel Music
St. Paul's School, Concord, NH

Parking behind the church building.
Handicap accessibility / elevator access is in the courtyard between old and new buildings.

Please bring your masks and enjoy the ample socially distanced seating.

THE FIRST CHURCH
1 Concord Street • Nashua, NH

For more information:
FIRST-MUSIC.ORG
603.882.4861

FIRST MUSIC FM CONCERT SERIES 2020–21 SEASON

FIRST MUSIC
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CONCERT SERIES 2020–21 SEASON

SEASON XIII
MUSIC ALIVE!

BRINGING the JOY of MUSIC to the GATE CITY

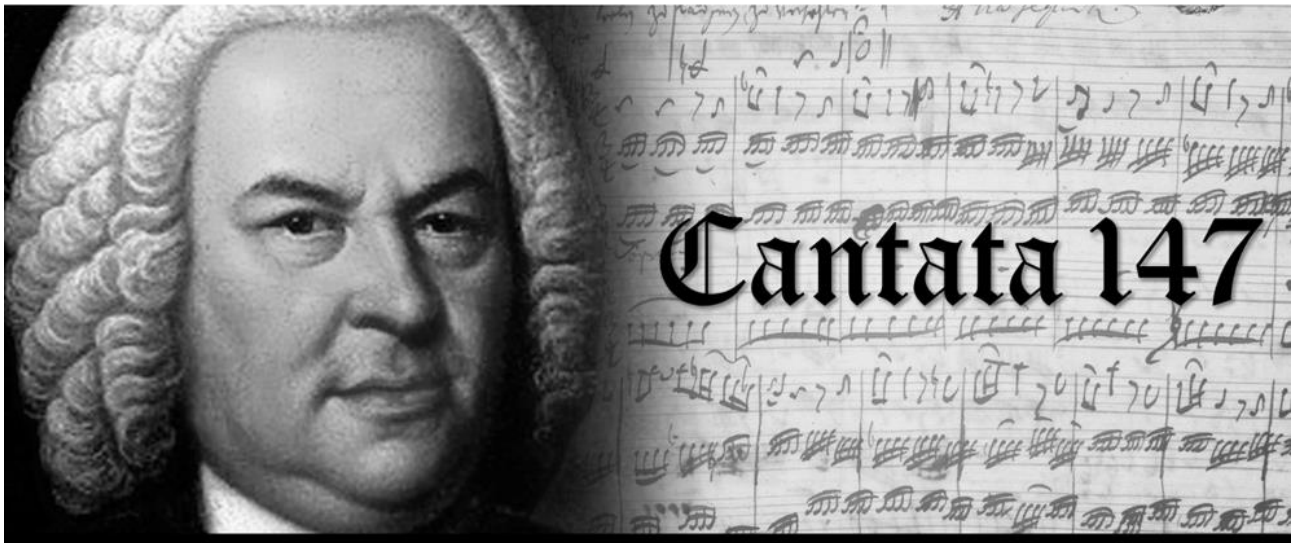
4th ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICES

CHRISTMAS at FIRST

THE FIRST CHURCH STAFF SINGER QUARTET

MUDDY BROOK CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

JOSEPH R. OLEFIROWICZ conductor



Please bring your masks and enjoy the ample socially distanced seating.

SUNDAY DEC 20

OPEN TO THE **PUBLIC**

ALL ARE WELCOME

9 & 11 AM

THE FIRST CHURCH

1 Concord Street
Nashua, NH

FIRST-MUSIC.ORG
603.882.4861

THE FIRST CHURCH

STAFF

Senior Minister, *Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong,* aarmstrong@tfcucc.org
Associate Minister for Congregational Care, *Rev. Jami D. Boyle,* jboyle@tfcucc.org
Minister of Music, *Joseph R. Olefirowicz, CAGO,* jolefirowicz@tfcucc.org
Director of Christian Formation, *LeeAnne Steenhoek,* lsteenhoek@tfcucc.org
Church Business and Marketing Manager, *Dianne Smigliani,* dsmigliani@tfcucc.org
Secretary/Receptionist, *Susan T. Englander,* senglander@tfcucc.org
Sexton, *Bruce Lund*

Pastors Emeriti, *Rev. James S. Chaloner and Rev. Dr. Jeffrey C. Evans*

WELCOME

A warm welcome is extended to all who are attending this worship service. A special greeting to those who are visiting or worshiping for the first time. Please sign the guest book in the back of the sanctuary or fill out the **visitor card** found in the pew racks. Fill out the back of the card, and put it in the offering plate or hand it to a minister, Usher or Deacon so we may acknowledge your visit. Join in the time of fellowship, in Chapel Hall, following worship. If you have any questions about the life and ministry of First Church please seek out the individuals wearing colored name tags; they are members of the various boards and committees.

INFORMATION

First Church was gathered on December 16, 1685 as The Church of Christ in Dunstable. On the same day Thomas Weld was ordained and settled as minister of the church. The current building, built in 1894, is the tenth building to house the First Church community. In 1961, the church entered fellowship with the United Church of Christ. We welcome into our membership any who will own the covenant of First Church and seek to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ in the community and world. Those interested in joining the church should contact the church office for information. New members are received during worship in November, February and May. The Sacrament of Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month and the Sacrament of Baptism on the last. First Church is supported almost entirely by pledges. Every member is expected to make a financial pledge according to their ability.

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral Care is available to all in need. Please keep the ministers informed of occasions of sickness, sorrow, and joy. Let the church office know if you or family member or friend is hospitalized.

COMMUNICATIONS

If you have a change of address, phone number, or email address, please let the church office know so that we may keep our records current.

All information for the weekly bulletin must be in the office by noon on Wednesday. All information for the monthly newsletter must be in the office by 4:30 PM on the second Monday of the month.

<u>All use of the building must be scheduled by the Secretary.</u>

THE FIRST CHURCH
NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

The First Church * One Concord Street * Nashua, New Hampshire 03064 * 882-4861

Office Hours:

Available by phone and appointment.

Visit our web site at www.tfcucc.org - Find us on Facebook